

Message Text

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TAGS PFOR CA

SUBJ TRUDEAU ON US RELATIONS: "VERY HIGH PRIORITY" AND "QUITE GOOD"

1. IN A CONVERSATION WITH MONTREAL STAR EDITOR GERALD CLARK, PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU SAID CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH THE US "HAVE TO BE, AND ARE, OF A VERY HIGH PRIORITY" AND DESCRIBED THEM AS "QUITE GOOD." THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE CONVERSATION WAS PUBLISHED IN THE STAR ON NOVEMBER 4. THE INTERVIEW IS ALSO CITED BY THE SAME WRITER IN AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "FROM TRUDEAUMANIA TO POLITICAL MATURITY," WHICH APPEARED IN THE NOVEMBER 3 EDITION OF "THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE."

2. TEXT OF CLARK'S TWO QUESTIONS ON US RELATIONS AND TRUDEAU'S REPLIES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: CLARK: IN AN ARBITRARY SCALE OF, SAY, 10 PRIORITIES, HOW WOULD YOU RATE CANADIAN-US RELATIONS? FOURTH, FIFTH, SIXTH OR WHATEVER? HOW WOULD YOU EQUATE NOW OUR NEW ECONOMIC STRENGTH IN TERMS OF ENERGY RESOURCES AND WHAT THIS NEW STRENGTH DOES TO OUR SELF-ASSERTION VIS-A-VIS THE UNITED STATES? YOU KNOW, IF YOU THINK

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BACK JUST 10 YEARS AGO, WHEN WE WERE BEGGING THE UNITED

STATES TO BUY OIL AND SO ON...

TRUDEAU: THAT'S RIGHT, LESS THAN THAT IF YOU THINK BACK AROUND 1970. THE PREMIERS OF SASKATCHEWAN AND ALBERTA-- I THINK AS RECENTLY AS 71--WERE COMPLAINING BECAUSE WE WEREN'T LOBBYING ENOUGH IN WASHINGTON TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY DIDN'T IMPOSE QUOTAS AND EMBARGOES ON THE OIL THEY WERE BUYING FROM US. SO THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT CHANGE.

THE FIRST PART OF YOUR QUESTION I WOULD FIND DIFFICULT TO ANSWER BECAUSE HOW DO YOU RANK PRIORITIES WHICH ARE OF COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ESSENCES? I MEAN, HOW DO YOU RANK THE PRIORITY OF PRESERVING A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT AGAINST THE PRIORITY OF HAVING A PEACEFUL WORLD OR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SO ON? YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY BALANCING OUT THESE VARIOUS PRIORITIES ALL THE TIME, AND SOMETIME YOU WILL PUT THE EMPHASIS ON ONE THING, THEN ON THE OTHER. I WOULD JUST SAY THAT GENERALLY RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES HAVE TO BE, AND ARE, OF A VERY HIGH PRIORITY. IT'S STILL OUR BIGGEST MARKET AND OUR BIGGEST SOURCE OF IMPORTS.

CLARK: WHAT DOES THIS ENERGY MEAN IN TERMS OF THE MOUST AND THE ELEPHANT CONCEPT NOW? IS IT A LITTLE MORE EQUAL?

TRUDEAU: WELL, IF YOU'RE ASKING WHETHER WE HAVE IMMENSELY INCREASED LEVERAGE OVER THE UNITED STATES NOW BECAUSE OF THE ENERGY SITUATION, I WOULD SAY 'NO'. I DON'T THINK YOU CAN CHANGE THE WAY OF AN ELEPHANT AS COMPRED TO--WHAT WAS THE OTHER PART OF THE METAPHOR?-- BY JUST FINDING SOME TEMPORARY SOURCE OF ADVANTAGE. WE OBVIOUSLY COULD IN A SHORT RUN HURT THE UNITED STATES BY CUTTING OFF BRUSQUELY THE OIL AND GAS THAT WE SEND TO IT. WE SAW LAST YEAR THAT WE COULD HURT THE UNITED STATES JUST BY BANNING CATTLE WHICH HAD BEEN TREATED WITH DES. THEREFORE, IN A VERY SHORT RUN, WE DO HAVE SOME LEVERAGE TO THESE KIND OF THINGS. BUT IT IS RIDICULOUS TO THINK THAT YOU CAN USE THAT KIND OF LEVERAGE OVER ANY LONG PERIOD OF TIME WITH A NEIGHBOR WHICH IS OBVIOUSLY SO MUCH BIGGER AND STRONGER AND HEAVIER THAN WE ARE.

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SO I THINK IT WOULD BE A VERY UNWISE GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD, SORT OF, SAY, 'YOU KNOW, WE'VE GOT THE UNITED STATES IN A BIND BECAUSE THEY NEED OUR ENERGY OR THEY NEED OUR MARKET FOR CATTLE.' THEY COULD HAVE US IN A BIND OVER SO MANY OTHER THINGS IF WE BOTH STARTED TO THROW OUR WEIGHT AROUND; IT WOULD BE RIDICULOUS FOR A GOVERNMENT TO ARGUE LIKE THAT. I THINK THE UNITED STATES UNDERSTANDS

THAT, AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT, AND, BECAUSE OF THAT, RELATIONS
HAVE BEEN QUITE GOOD. THEY COULD BE MEAN TO US AND WE COULD
BE MEAN BACK AND WE WOULD BOTH BE THE POORER FOR IT.
BUT CANADIANS WOULD BE THE LOSERS IN THAT KIND OF A
CONTEST. END QUOTE.

3. TEXT OF STAR TRANSCRIPT BEING POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT.
PORTER

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